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## GENERAL NOTES.

## PRIZES OFFERED BY THE FRENCH ACADEMY OF SCIENCES.

The sum of 100,000 francs has been bequeathed by Madame GUZMAN to the French Academy of Sciences as a prize, to bear the name of the PIERRE GUZMAN Prize, in memory of her son, and to be awarded to one who shall discover means of communicating with some astral body other than the planet *Mars*. Forseeing that this prize will probably remain unclaimed for some time to come, provision has been made that the accumulating interest shall be used for prizes, also bearing the name PIERRE GUZMAN, to be awarded at intervals of five years to scholars, either French or foreign, who shall make important contributions to the Science of Astronomy. The year 1910 has been fixed upon as the date for the first award.

Other prizes offered by the Academy are: The LALANDE Prize (annual,) of 540fr. for the one making the most interesting observation or publishing the memoir most useful to the progress of astronomy.

The VALZ Prize (annual,) of 460fr. for the most interesting astronomical observation.

The G. DE PONTECOULANT Prize of 700fr. (biennial) to encourage researches in Celestial Mechanics, to be awarded in 1907.

The DAMOISEAU Prize of 2000fr. (triennial,) to be awarded in 1908, for a theory of the planet *Eros*, based on all known observations.

The JANSSEN Prize of a gold medal (biennial,) to be awarded in 1908, for a discovery or research embodying important progress in physical astronomy.

THE PRESSURE OF LIGHT. The Friday evening lecture at the Royal Institution last week was given by Professor J. H. POYNTING, whose subject was "Some Astronomical Consequences of the Pressure of Light." The lecturer said that the pressure of light—or rather of the whole range of radiation from the infra-red to the ultra-violet—which had been predicted by CLERK MAXWELL and proved to exist by the experiments of NICHOLS and HULL and of LEBEDEV, constituted a new force that had to be reckoned with. Though apparently negligible in terrestrial affairs—the pressure on the Earth would amount to some 75,000 tons, which was a mere

nothing in comparison with the gravitational pull of the Sun—it might have considerable importance out in the solar system in regard to bodies which, though smaller than our planet, were yet much larger than those which composed the tails of comets. He considered a beam of light as a carrier of momentum, bearing with it a forward push which it was ready to impart to any body on which it impinged, and exerting a backward push on the source from which it had been radiated. He discussed the effects that arose on the supposition that either the source or the receiving surface was in motion, and examined the conditions, as to size and distance, in which the gravitational pull on masses of matter would be outbalanced by the pressure of the Sun's radiation. Taking the case of a comet, regarded as composed, to begin with, of a compact cloud of particles of various sizes, he pointed out that the coarser particles, as the comet revolved round the Sun, would get in front and the finer trail behind. After several hundred revolutions the finer dust would have drifted nearer the Sun, and, given time, the different sizes might become so scattered as to lose all appearance of connection with each other. There could be no doubt that this effect existed, if comets had the constitution they were now supposed to have, and its result must be that a comet would in time, undergo dissolution and ultimately end in the Sun. *The Times* of May 14th, 1906.

NEW ASTRONOMER ROYAL OF IRELAND. Following closely upon the appointment of Mr. F. W. DYSON to the post of Astronomer Royal for Scotland and Professor of Astronomy, comes that of Mr. E. T. WHITTAKER to a similar position in the sister island. As the writer of the "Oxford Note Book" points out, both Mr. DYSON and Mr. WHITTAKER held the Sheepshanks Astronomical Exhibition, Mr. WHITTAKER also an Isaac Newton Studentship, while Trinity College, Cambridge, numbers among its Fellows the Royal Astronomers of these three kingdoms.—*Journal of the British Astro. Association*.

The following notes have been taken from recent numbers of *Science*:

Rear-Admiral COLBY M. CHESTER, superintendent of the U. S. Naval Observatory, was placed on the retired list on February 28th. He will be retained in temporary active duty in the Bureau of Navigation. Rear-Admiral CHESTER will be succeeded in charge of the Naval Observatory by Rear-Admiral ASA WALKER.

Professor E. C. PICKERING, director of the Harvard Col-

lege Observatory, has been elected a corresponding member of the Berlin Academy of Sciences.

Professor JAMES MILLS PEIRCE, who was appointed tutor in Harvard University in 1854, and has been Perkins professor of astronomy since 1885, died from pneumonia at his home in Cambridge on March 21st.

Mr. FEE writes, in a consular report, that the new standard time for India was adopted in Bombay, on January 1st, and is gradually overcoming the prejudice incident to a new departure. He further says: "The Indian standard time is in advance five hours and thirty minutes of Greenwich time, being nine minutes faster than Madras time, about twenty-four minutes slower than Calcutta time, and about thirty-nine minutes faster than Bombay local mean time, the longitude of the city of Bombay being  $72^{\circ} 52'$  east of Greenwich. Five hours and thirty minutes advance of Greenwich time would be the local mean time for longitude  $82^{\circ} 30'$  east of Greenwich. This parallel of longitude passes through India at about the eastern mouth of the Godavery River in the Bay of Bengal, and near Benares, the sacred city of the Hindus, on the Ganges River. It is the local mean time of this parallel that now sets the standard of time for all India."

Dr. ANDING, professor in the University of Munich, has been appointed director of the observatory at Gotha.

Dr. PAUL GUTHNICK, of Bothkamp, has been appointed astronomer in the Royal Observatory at Berlin.

The next meeting of the Astronomical and Astrophysical Society of America, will be held at New York, in affiliation with the American Association for the Advancement of Science, during convocation week, 1906-7.

The *Observatore Romano* officially announces that the Rev. JOHN GEORGE HAGEN, director of the observatory at Georgetown University, is in Rome, and will be appointed director of the Vatican Observatory.

Dr. JOHN ANTHONY MILLER, professor of Mechanics and Astronomy, in Indiana University since 1895, has resigned in order to accept the professorship of Mathematics and Astronomy in Swarthmore College.

MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS,  
HELD AT THE FACULTY CLUB, UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, BER-  
KELEY, SUNDAY, MAY 20, 1906, AT 3:30 P. M.

President LEUSCHNER presided. A quorum was present. The minutes of the last meeting were approved. The following members were duly elected.

ELECTION.

Professor HEBER D. CURTIS, Casilla 1219, Santiago, Chile.

Mr. J. WALTER MILES, Irwin, Pennsylvania.

Dr. J. H. MOORE, Lick Observatory, Mount Hamilton, California.

Mr. W. P. RUSSELL, Pomona College, Claremont, California.

Mr. GEORGE W. SPENCER, 458 Ninth street, Oakland.

The secretary reported that the personal property of the society, including its entire library, pictures, furniture and archives, contained in its rooms in the California Academy of Sciences Building, 819 Market street, was totally destroyed by the conflagration of April 18th, 1906. The funds of the society, consisting of investments aggregating \$15,959.54, are all intact, as well as a supply of the *Publications*, stored at the Lick Observatory.

The following resolutions were adopted:

*Resolved*, that the *Publications* of the society be continued as usual.

*Resolved*, that the *Publication* No. 107 which was in press at the time of the fire, be reprinted.

*Resolved*, that the Publication Committee be allowed to expend \$700 for *Publications* (including No. 107,) to the end of December, 1906.

*Resolved* that the Finance Committee be instructed to provide the funds necessary to meet the obligations of the society, by drawing upon such funds as they may deem advisable.

*Resolved* that the President and Library Committee be authorized to prepare a circular regarding the loss of the society's library, to be sent to such institutions and persons as they may select.

*Resolved*, that a meeting of the society be held at the Lick Observatory on the last Saturday of September.

*Resolved*, that the invitation extended to the society by the President of the University of California, to make the Students' Observatory at Berkeley, the temporary headquarters of the library of the society, be accepted, and the grateful thanks of the Board of Directors be returned to President WHEELER for his courteous offer.

Adjourned.

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MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY OF THE  
PACIFIC, HELD AT THE STUDENTS' OBSERVATORY AT BERKELEY,  
ON SATURDAY, JUNE 9, 1906, AT 8 P. M.

The society was called to order by President LEUSCHNER, who introduced as lecturers of the evening, Professor F. OMORI of the Imperial University of Tokio, Japan, who presented a paper on Observations of Distant Earthquakes, and Professor A. C. LAWSON, of the University of California, who spoke more particularly of the California Earthquake of April 18th, 1906.

After the conclusion of the addresses, the observatory buildings were opened for the inspection of members and visitors.